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ABSTRACT

In response to Legislative Resolve 47 of the 1989 Alaska Legislature, the Alaska State Board of Education prepared this report on efforts to improve school performance and recommendations for legislative action. In the past year, the State Board met with educators, parents, Native leaders and organizations, nationally known experts, and appropriate legislative committees; appointed task forces to examine four major areas; and drafted legislative proposals. These proposals recommend that the legislature appropriate funds to: (1) restructure educational services in grades K-4, emphasizing language development and integration of curriculum content; (2) develop business and school partnerships aimed at preventing dropout; (3) create incentive programs to encourage high risk students to stay in school; (4) provide early childhood education and parenting programs; and (5) develop an evaluation and research agenda to focus on Alaska's education problems. The Alaska Department of Education will form partnerships with colleges and universities to strengthen teacher education programs and to recruit Native and rural residents. The Department of Education will develop pilot projects aimed at improving student performance in low performing districts. The State Board of Education will adopt a statewide school improvement plan featuring standards for educational outcomes, objectives for low performing districts, and an assessment and monitoring system. Appendices contain information on: (1) factors contributing to poor student performance; (2) the extent of Alaska's at-risk problem; (3) common characteristics of the 20 low achieving school districts; (4) state standards for outcomes of public education; and (5) State Board of Education long-range goals for school and student performance. (SV)

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Improving School Performance

A Report to the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature

February 1, 1990

Alaska Department of Education

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Improving School Performance

A Report to the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature

February 1, 1990

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Improving School Performance

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STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1989

Source	Legislative Resolve No.
HCR 33	42

Relating to improving school performance.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the state has a constitutional obligation to maintain a system of public education in the state under art. VII, sec. 1, Constitution of the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS the state should be striving to provide the highest quality education for each student, for the long-term benefit of each student, and for the state as a whole; and

WHEREAS student achievement test scores show great disparity between school districts in the state; and

WHEREAS the state has the responsibility to ensure that educational opportunities are equitably available throughout the state;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the State Board of Education is respectfully requested to direct the Department of Education to develop a plan to help those districts where education performance is suffering the most; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education is requested to work with the appropriate legislative committees to develop a plan for improving education in the state and to suggest legislative remedies; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education is requested to report back to the legislature by February 1, 1990, concerning efforts to improve school performance in the state.

Improving School Performance

The 1989 Alaska Legislature approved Legislative Resolve 47 that requested the State Board of Education:

- to direct the Department of Education to develop a plan to assist low achieving school districts;
- to work with the appropriate legislative committees to develop a plan for improving education in the state, including legislative remedies; and
- to report to the legislature, by February 1, 1990, efforts to improve school performance in the state.

This publication, in response to Legislative Resolve 47, reports on the efforts to improve school performance and proposes recommendations to improve education in Alaska's schools. This report is separated into four major parts:

- State Board's Work with Appropriate Legislative Committees
- Recommendations to Improve Student and School Performance
  - Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade Youth
  - Early Childhood and Parenting
  - Teacher Training
  - Research and Evaluation
  - Model Programs
- School Improvement Plan
- Appendices

Background

The State Board of Education is encouraged about the increased statewide attention from the public and policy makers on low achieving school districts and students. It is not surprising that the findings and recommendations in this report are similar to those found in recent reports of the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance; Senate Special Committee on School Performance; and the Alaska Federation of Natives report on the Status of Alaska Natives. The similarities are no accident. The State Board believes that other public groups which study the issues will develop similar findings and recommendations.

The State Board and Department of Education have undertaken a number of policy and programmatic initiatives to improve the performance of schools and students. To accomplish these efforts, the Board and Department have engaged the assistance of individual public educators and education organizations, parents and parent organizations, university officials, Native leaders and organizations,

child care providers, non-profit organizations, and other government agencies. The State Board's activities have varied from informal small group meetings, to task forces with specific charges, to public hearings.

Perhaps the largest and most concerted effort to date was the State Board's project to develop ideas and build support for programs to meet the needs of children at risk of school failure. On June 6 and 7, 1989, the Board convened a meeting in Anchorage to begin work on a strategy. A selected group of Alaskans, and a few nationally noted experts, brainstormed ideas about how schools can better meet the needs of many students not currently successful in school. In the end, the group recommended that task forces be appointed to examine four major areas: programs for at-risk students; improving teachers and teaching; social services for students; and programs for kindergarten through twelfth grade students. Members for the four task forces were recruited statewide; respected experts from public and higher education were appointed to chair each task force; and Department of Education employees provided staff assistance. In November, the four task forces presented their findings to the State Board, and the State Board began crafting a legislative proposal based on the work of the task forces. These four reports proved useful to the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance.

Other important Board activities have led to the following:

- **Statewide Outcomes**

  The State Board of Education is in the process of developing statewide outcomes for education. The outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes that Alaska's children should attain during their formal schooling.

  The State Board has undergone an extensive outreach program for the past six months to provide groups and individuals ample opportunity to help shape the outcomes. The State Board plans to continue the outreach program through the remainder of 1990 school year. The Board hopes to establish the outcomes as formal regulations in the fall of 1990. A draft of the outcomes is included as Appendix D.

- **Goals for Education**

  The State Board has established a number of long-range goals to guide its activities over the long term in a planned, systematic way towards improving education in Alaska. Three of the goals address student and school improvement. (Appendix E).

- **Student Assessment**
  The Department of Education, at the direction of the State Board of Education and Legislature, in 1989-90 conducted the first statewide student assessment of 4th, 6th and 8th graders using a uniform assessment test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The report reinforced the knowledge that low achieving school districts have high concentrations of students from families whose parents speak a language other than English at home. In most cases, the low achieving school districts are located in rural Alaska Native communities.

A. Work with Appropriate Legislative Committees

The State Board of Education and Department of Education interacted with legislators a number of times in recent months on issues related to school performance. Most important:

- The Commissioner of Education and President of the State Board of Education testified before the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance.

- The State Board met with the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance during a regular State Board of Education meeting in Fairbanks.

- The State Board and legislators visited schools in the Lower Kuskokwim, Yupiit, Lower Yukon, St. Mary's and Kashunamiut school districts to examine schools in Bethel, Nunapitchuk, Kasigluk, Kwethluk, Akiachak, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Quinhagak, Eek, Chevak, St. Mary's, Hooper Bay and Tununak. The Board and legislators also met with parents, elder councils, students and other community members informally and at public hearings to hear comments about the status of education.

- The State Board submitted four reports on school improvement developed through a Board-initiated public process for use in the deliberations of the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance.

- The State Board and Commissioner of Education held informal meetings with legislators on school reform and plan to continue such meetings on a formal and informal basis throughout the 1990 legislative session.

B. Recommendations to Improve Student and School Performance

1. Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade Students

The State Board requests the Legislature to approve an incentive grant program to improve education for children at risk of school failure. This package should include $3 million to be distributed by the Department of Education for classroom, school or community programs for the following purposes:

- to restructure educational services in kindergarten though grade four, emphasizing language development and integration of curriculum content areas;
- to develop business and school partnerships designed to foster attitudes and understanding necessary for students to stay in high school though successful experience in business and industry, secondary magnet schools and alternative forms of schooling and training;
- to create incentive programs for schools, school districts, parent groups or students to reward successful efforts to encourage youth at risk to graduate from high school;
- to conduct research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of other programs or projects.

2. Early Childhood Education and Parenting

The legislature should appropriate $10 million to make available early childhood programs to every child who currently is not served and is in need of such a program. These funds should be used to expand Alaska's Head Start, Head Start type programs and other programs for infants and young children. Programs eligible for funding include:

- early childhood education programs, including parenting; comprehensive early childhood development and education; child care education and training; services to young parents; pre-elementary schooling and parent and child education programs, including at-risk special infant learning programs;
- preservice and inservice training of teachers, aides and administrators in skills necessary to promote culturally appropriate developmental activities and pedagogy in language, mathematics and other subject areas;

- research and evaluation programs, and programs to develop and increase opportunities for linguistically, developmentally and culturally appropriate programs for parenting and working with infants and young children in overcoming barriers to learning;

- research projects designed to evaluate the effectiveness of other programs or projects.

The legislature should establish an Early Childhood Education Coordinating Committee chaired by the Commissioner of Education and to include representatives of the State Board of Education and commissioners of Health and Social Services, Community and Regional Affairs, and Labor. The committee shall recommend policy and direction for early childhood development and education programs and services for infants and children to elementary school age to improve the potential of infants and children to succeed in the educational system.

3. Teacher Training

The Department will form partnerships with the colleges and universities in the state to:

- Strengthen teacher education training programs through internship and mentor programs, and through more rigorous standards for teacher training.

- Strengthen inservice teacher education programs by expanding Alaska Summer Leadership Academies offered for teachers and administrators.

- Recruit and train larger numbers of Native and rural residents as teachers and school administrators to meet the needs for more Native educators, and to establish a permanent base of resident teachers.

- Increase the capacity of teacher training programs in Alaska to promote teaching practices in the area of language development. Because of Alaska's linguistic and cultural diversity teachers and schools need to be responsive to children who begin school with differing language competencies.

4. Research and Evaluation

The State Board recommends the legislature appropriate $250,000 to develop an evaluation and research agenda to focus on Alaska's education problems,

evaluations of existing education programs, and research that will improve student academic performance, social and cultural development and adult employment. The research agenda should be established by the Commissioner of Education in partnership with school districts and the University of Alaska.

5. Model Programs

The Alaska Department of Education engages in a number of pilot and experimental programs funded through state, federal, and other funds to improve student performance in low performing districts and with at-risk students. These programs will be evaluated for possible expansion and further replication as staff and funding permit. Examples of the types of programs the Department will continue to explore include:

Education for Parenting Pilot Projects
This curriculum for K-8 grade students teaches parenting and caring skills. Programs are being piloted in Southwest Region and Dillingham school districts and will be expanded to four additional sites.

Elementary School Restructuring
This joint effort among several school districts and the Department of Education examines the role of elementary education in Alaska and is altering the structure of elementary schools to make them more responsive to the needs of children and families. The Department has provided a week-long academic session to develop school restructuring plans using a team approach. The Department will provide follow-up sessions and technical assistance for three years. Other Department activities include evaluation and assessment assistance, assistance in seeking funding sources, and publication of results.

Suicide Prevention Pilot Project
Two joint projects of suicide prevention are being developed between local school sites and mental health agencies. Projects will develop student referral systems, curriculum, student assistance programs and appropriate treatment services.

Task Force on Special Education for Culturally Different Students
This project addresses the issues of over representation and misidentification of culturally different students in special education, with emphasis on the categories of speech impairment and learning disability. The

project includes a review of literature and practice, an examination of the problems in Alaska and recommendations for addressing the problems.

"Alaska's Youth: Ready for Work" Demonstration Projects
Demonstration projects will be operated to: develop and implement programs to prepare school youth for work; develop partnerships between employers, schools and community organizations to better serve youth; encourage school restructuring and institutional change; and monitor, document, and evaluate the program. Project components will include: pre-employment and work maturity skills; basic skills improvement and academic achievement; occupational skills; work ethics and values; attitudes, cooperative education and on-the-job training and work experience; and career guidance and counseling. The departments of Education, Labor, Community and Regional Affairs, private industry councils, the State Job Training Coordinating Committee and the Governor's Council on Career and Vocational Education will design, implement, and evaluate the projects. A research component will be coordinated through the University of Alaska.

Coalition for Alaska At-Risk Youth
This project, which will be carried out through the Alaska Staff Development Network, will provide in-depth training for five pilot schools in dealing with at-risk issues and students at risk of school failure.

C. School Improvement Plan

The State Board of Education will adopt a statewide school improvement plan. The plan will be based upon broad educational outcomes (Appendix D) describing the general knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students will obtain during their formal schooling. The particulars of the plan follow:

Part One: Statewide Educational Outcomes

- The State Board of Education will adopt statewide outcomes for education.

- The Board will require each of the 54 school districts to establish instructional objectives based upon the State Board's outcomes. The local objectives will be clearly stated and measurable.

- Each school district will frequently monitor and evaluate instructional objectives.

- School districts will report progress toward the objectives annually to the public, the Department and the Legislature. The district report will measure student progress against the State Board's outcomes and local district objectives.

- Each district will link school improvement activities aimed at providing remedies when measurement reveals shortcomings.

- To create and maintain educational equity, the Department will provide technical assistance to districts in their efforts to establish, measure and report performance objectives, and to otherwise improve their instructional programs.

- To develop appropriate local and state practices for educational accountability, all districts will be encouraged to consider new instruction and assessment methods that permit flexibility at each school site to accomplish and measure State Board recommended outcomes.

Part Two: Plan to Assist Low Performing School Districts

- The Department of Education will work with low performing school districts to assess and evaluate local instructional objectives to ensure identified State Board of Education outcomes are met.

- Inadequacies will be mutually addressed by the district and the Department of Education to:

    - Assess and identify factors influencing the district's performance.

    - Design a program with sound curriculum and instructional methods to meet performance objectives.

    - Provide technical assistance to the district on the design and implementation of the program.

    - Provide staff training and support to implement new or innovative instructional methods.

    - Evaluate and assess the program's success.

- The efforts with low performing districts and communities should result in strategies and structures that will be implemented over a sufficient period of time to allow for full evaluation.

- Strategies and structures must also be designed to be independent from the negative effects of high teacher and administrative turnover. Community commitment and empowerment can help ensure teacher stability.

Part Three: School Improvement Plan Monitoring System

The State Board will direct the Department to develop assessment and monitoring models that will lead to a comprehensive statewide assessment to determine the extent to which outcomes for public education are achieved. While it is important to note that a comprehensive assessment plan has not been developed to date, it is equally important to note that progress has been made in this area. Progress includes:

Annual Statewide Student Assessment

In accordance with 4 AAC 06.700 - 770, all 4th, 6th and 8th grade students will continue to be assessed annually in the basic skill areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Collection of High School Drop Out Statistics

Beginning with the 1990-91 school year, the Department of Education annually will gather and report statewide information on the rate and characteristics of students who leave school before graduation.

Writing Assessment

The Department of Education will continue to expand the assessment of writing of 10th grade students. Full statewide implementation will begin in FY 92.

School District Profiles

The Department of Education will continue to gather and publish the school district statistical profiles. The profiles will track key financial, student, staff, facility, and school program information. The Department will expand this data base in FY 91 to include the status of district compliance with state regulations.

Enrollment and Staffing Data

The Department of Education will continue to track trends in enrollment, staffing and staff turnover.

Appendix A

Factors That Influence Student Performance

A number of factors commonly contribute to poor student performance, which often lead to failure and dropping out of school. These factors crop up repeatedly in research literature, through the experiences of educators across the United States and in the testimony of Alaska's educators, parents and other community members in formal and informal settings before the State Board of Education.

The factors that influence student performance are:

Parent Involvement

Research has long shown the benefits of meaningful parent involvement. In fact it has become almost axiomatic that wherever there is a strong educational program there will be a correspondingly strong, planned, systematic program of parent involvement in the child's education, no matter the level of the child's schooling. Unfortunately, the disintegration of the traditional family unit has created great difficulty for schools that try to knit strong bonds between the school and parents. Furthermore, many schools have attempted to teach only from a Western cultural viewpoint, which has alienated the involvement of minority families in the school.

Language Proficiency

A major factor contributing to poor student performance is limited language proficiency. In Alaska, many rural students from an environment where early language acquisition is not promoted or where the primary home language is different from the language taught in school (English) fail to attain levels of acceptable performance in school. Poor achievement and dropping out of school are often the result. According to the Alaska Department of Education's Annual Report on Basic Skills Performance of Alaska's Students, "many of the lowest achieving students live in homes where English is a second language."

Relationship Between the Home Culture and School Expectations and Values

Conflict between the home culture and the expectations and values of the school system very often result in poor performance. This, too, leads to school failure and dropping out of school. The conflict in many communities between Native cultures and the Western culture that the school reflects is particularly strong.

Families Under Stress

The types of family stress that tend to affect student performance revolve around health issues economic issues.

Families under stress due to health issues limit their ability to support the educational growth of their children due to factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse. Teenage substance abuse, suicide, pregnancy, and fetal alcohol syndrome, result from dysfunctional families, and in turn create further educational and social problems.

Economic stress also influences the ability of children to learn and grow. A related problem that contributes to children's ability to learn is the growing phenomenon of single parent families. A recent research report (Milne, et al., 1986) reveals that children growing up in a single-parent family have a 93% chance of living in poverty at least one year while growing up. They have a 61% chance of being in poverty throughout the first ten years of their lives. By contrast, children in two-parent homes have only a 2% chance of being poor continuously during ages 0-10.

School Attendance

The research indicates that students with high rate of absenteeism are also more likely to fail and drop out of school. This absenteeism may be due to a number of factors including families under stress, migration, or subsistence needs for hunting and fishing. Whatever the cause of the absences, excessive absenteeism is a barrier to student performance.

Geographical Limitations

Living and learning in isolation may limit educational options. Most of Alaska's rural schools are small. Eighty-three kindergarten through twelfth grade schools enroll 25 students or fewer.

Especially at the high school level it is difficult for these small schools to offer the broad range of courses and resources considered necessary for a comprehensive education. Most of these communities are physically isolated and are unable to provide adequate library and school laboratory facilities.

Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition in some rural Alaskan schools exceeds 50% annually. Schools with high turnover lack the continuity in curriculum and instructional programs to promote long-term student growth. The attrition problem will become more severe during the 1990-91 school year because of the early retirement option offered to educators statewide. School districts will need to hire approximately 1,300 teachers and administrators for the 1990-91 school year, about 20 percent of the total certified work force.

Teacher Preparation and Lack of Minority Role Models in Schools

Most rural Alaska teachers and administrators have been trained by institutions of higher education which may not have focused on rural education. This is problematic in Alaska where the majority of educators hired annually have been trained in "Lower 48" institutions not familiar with Alaska's unusual cultural and remote geographic conditions. Training for presently hired teachers in new and innovative teaching methods is difficult to obtain in Alaska. While school districts offer training opportunities and the University of Alaska extends outreach courses, only 5 of Alaska's 54 school districts are within driving distance of a university campus, limiting the scope of continuing education opportunities.

Studies show tendencies by many teachers to set different expectations for, and different behavior toward, low-achieving students than for higher achievers. Teachers tend to give the higher achievers more interesting assignments. They give low achievers less time to answer questions and more "low order" drill and practice. They tend to interrupt the low achievers more and have them do less self-evaluation than the higher achievers.

There is a serious lack of Native Alaskan and other minority teachers and administrators. More Native administrators and teachers are needed to act as role models for Native children and to help bridge the gap between home and school cultures.

School Governance

Research indicates that many elementary schools are structured at odds with how children learn. The most effective schools are responsive to curriculum and classroom environment that responds to learning patterns of children within given age ranges; to individual differences among children; and to cultural and linguistic diversity among children. This is especially so for early primary grades, kindergarten through fourth grades. Rather than a lock-step age level approach to learning, children should be taught according to their personal abilities.

At the high school level, the United States has been clinging to an industrial model of schooling at odds with the ever increasing information-based global economy. This structure is even more inappropriate when overlaid on small rural schools that lack the facilities and teaching staff to offer a complete high school curriculum.

School/Community Partnerships

The absence of school/community partnerships inhibits acceptable student performance. Researchers across the nation recognize that the cause of low performance may rest with either the school, the family, with the broader community, or some combination thereof. Historically, schools in rural Alaska have isolated themselves from the broader community, and overlook the need for a sense of mutual purpose in education.

Appendix B

Extent of the At-Risk Problem

While the vast majority of students in Alaska's schools are performing at or above national standards, a large number of students are not acquiring acceptable levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become productive citizens. These statistics show the extent of the problem:

Limited Language Proficiency

Statewide, 10.3% of all students are enrolled in a bilingual program.

There are 172 different languages spoken in Alaska with the Native Alaskans five basic languages comprising the largest group. The largest numbers of students entering school with a language other than English as their language base are Yup'ik Eskimo students.

Based on the last census, approximately one in seven Alaskans (approximately 72,000) is functionally illiterate in English.

Cultural Differences

68% of Alaska's students are White, 21% are Alaska Native and 11% are representatives from other ethnic groups (1989-90).

Twenty-two of Alaska's 54 school district enrollments exceed 75% Native Alaskans (1989-90). Twenty-nine districts enroll more than 50% Native Alaskan (1989-90).

Teacher Attrition and Ethnic Background

The average percent of teachers new to a school district statewide is 22%. This figure does not reflect total teacher turnover as many teachers transfer to other schools and communities within districts each year.

91% of Alaska's teachers are White, 2.5% are Black, 3.2% are Alaska Native and 3.3% are representatives of other ethnic groups (1988-89).

Dropout Rates

An estimated 30% of freshmen entering Alaska's high schools do not graduate. In urban areas, in excess of 60% of Native freshmen do not graduate. The dropout rate in rural schools is about 12% to 15%, but the average student achievement levels are lower in rural areas than in urban areas.

Economic Factors

Estimates show that one in 6.5 Alaskans under 18 lives in families whose income is below the poverty level. Children in poverty are one-third less likely to graduate from high school.

In Anchorage, 70% of single mothers with children under six years of age are working outside the home.

23% of single fathers have sole responsibility for their children six years old or younger.

Health and Social Issues

Alaska's teenage pregnancy rate is 13% higher than the national average, ninth highest in the nation.

Alaska's suicide rate is among the highest in the nation, with the Alaska Native male, ages 20-24, 13 times the Alaskan average. For every suicide an additional 110 attempts are serious enough to require medical attention.

One in four children in Alaska has an alcoholic parent.

The Alaska Native Health Board, in 1985, suggested a link between suicidal behavior and community stress, specifically citing stress caused by rapid social change as key.

The alcohol and other substance abuse problems in Alaska, resulting in family violence, high rates of criminal activity, and social deterioration, are significant. Student populations are not exempt from these problems.

Alaska divorce rate is 70% compared to the national average of 50%. Alaska divorce rate is the second highest in the nation.

Geographic and School Size

43% of Alaska's schools enroll fewer than 100 students (187 schools).

83 schools with kindergarten through twelfth grade enrollments enroll fewer than 25 students.

The *1987-88 Alaska High School Seniors Survey Report* from the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education shows students report significant differences in school satisfaction between large and small schools. Small schools were identified as having fewer than 250 students. Reported as the percent of "outstanding" ratings:

	Small schools	Large schools
Library and learning facilities	13.1%	30.3%
Vocational training	19.0%	28.0%
Variety of courses	8.7%	21.3%
Laboratory facilities	7.9%	16.4%

Reports from Alaska seniors taking the American College Test in 1989 indicate that:

34% reported dissatisfaction with the number and variety of course offerings
18% expressed dissatisfaction with laboratory facilities and 15% with library facilities
17% said they were dissatisfied with provisions for academically outstanding students
23% said the career education and planning services at their schools needed improvement

Appendix C

Common Characteristics of the Twenty Lowest Achieving School Districts in Alaska

Twenty of Alaska's 54 school districts scored on average below the 22nd percentile in either reading, mathematics, or language arts at the 4th, 6th or 8th grade. A score at the 22nd percentile means that 78 percent of other students across the country scored higher on the test and 21 percent scored lower. It is important to remember three items:

- Many of Alaska's schools have very small enrollments and sometimes test only five, six or even fewer students at a grade level. One or two test scores can greatly influence a school district's average, sometimes resulting in one grade's scores being relatively high and another relatively low.

- A single standardized assessment test, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills used in Alaska's statewide assessment, is far from a perfect measurement of school and student performance. While it does measure important factors, it does not measure all the important skills, knowledge and attitudes that schools are expected to teach.

- The common characteristics listed below are from school districts that scored at the 22nd percentile or lower in at least one grade level in reading, mathematics or language arts. Considered separately, not every school will match these characteristics nor will each have all scores below the 22nd percentile.

Low performing districts have the following characteristics:

Poverty

While the statewide annual per capita income is $18,321, the average for communities in the 20 lowest achieving districts is $13,476. Half of these districts have an average per capita income below $12,000.

Average percent of students living in poverty in these districts is 56% as opposed to a statewide average of 21.8%.

Eighteen of those 20 districts report the percent of students in poverty ranging from 22.6% to 87.7%.

While the statewide unemployment rate is 8%, communities in 15 of the 20 districts report a range of 10% to 19% unemployment rates.

School Population

Total school population in the twenty districts is 12,783.

Cultural and Language Differences

The average percent of Native children in the 20 districts is 87%.

Nineteen of the 20 districts have over 50% Native students with the range of those districts being from 59.7% to 98.2% Native students.

Thirteen of the 20 districts report significant numbers of migrant students with 11 of those reporting from 25% to 83% of their students being migrant.

Sixteen of the districts report an above average level of bilingual students ranging from 23.5% to 100% enrolled in bilingual education programs.

All 20 districts have lower than average number of adults in the community with a high school diploma. While the statewide average is 83%, the average for the twenty districts is 54.2%.

Teaching Staff

Eighteen of these 20 districts have a higher than statewide average number of Native teachers in their schools, with 13 reporting 10% or more Native teachers. However, the ratio of Native teachers to Native students is still low. The highest ratio is 30.4% Native teachers to 98.2% Native children.

Nine of the 20 districts have a higher than average teacher turnover rate, reporting a range of 25% to 65.4% new teachers in 1988.

Other Educational Factors

Sixteen of the districts have a higher than average representation of students enrolled in special education courses. Five of them report more than 20% of their student population to be special education students. The statewide average is 12.5%.

Statewide 5.4% of the student population is assisted by federal Chapter I programs, designed for disadvantaged underachieving students. All but two of the 20 low performing districts have very high percentages of Chapter I students, ranging from 10.2% to 50%.

Sixteen of the districts have high vocational education enrollments ranging from 71.7% to 94.8% of the students. The statewide average is 61.6% of students enrolled in vocational education programs.

Appendix D

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January 30, 1990

Outcomes for Public Education

The Alaska State Board of Education believes that the purpose of public education in this State is to ensure that each student possesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for responsible citizenship, economic productivity and personal fulfillment. The State Board further believes that such education is the responsibility of everyone—students, parents, professional staff and community.

The Outcomes for Public Education will set the state standards for student performance. Each school district will identify, through a community involvement process, how they expect to achieve and evaluate the outcomes. A multi-faceted local and state accountability system will evaluate and report the results.

The State Board of Education believes that ALL students can learn and therefore expects that each student in Alaska will:

Communicate effectively

1. Develop oral language skills through listening and speaking in order to effectively express his or her feelings, ideas and concepts.
2. Develop reading comprehension skills to respond to the written information he or she faces in daily activities. The student will also develop positive attitudes toward reading as a lifelong activity.
3. Develop awareness and appreciation of languages other than English to promote understanding and communication among people of different cultures.
4. Learn to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
5. Be able to understand numbers, equations, and graphs well enough to make decisions based on that information, and to communicate mathematical ideas in oral and written form using standard vocabulary and notation.

Think logically and critically

1. Develop thoughtful, coherent responses to new information and ideas.
2. Solve problems using different modes of inquiry and analysis.
3. Be open to new ideas and demonstrate curiosity about the world and himself or herself.
4. Develop decision-making skills.
5. Evaluate situations with a mathematical content and apply relevant problem-solving strategies.
6. Develop and practice vigorous study skills and habits.
7. Develop the ability to process and integrate information.

Discover and nurture his or her own creative talents

1. Develop an aesthetic appreciation for the world around us.
2. Participate in a variety of interdisciplinary projects and activities.
3. Use divergent thinking and a variety of media to understand and express the complexity of our world - past, present and future.
4. Respect and nurture the creative talents of individuals and groups.

Master essential technological skills

1. Communicate effectively in the global society, including the use of computers, video, and audio technologies.
2. Learn information retrieval skills to gather, analyze and evaluate new information and opinions.
3. Critically evaluate information presented by the mass media.

Demonstrate responsible citizenship

1. Understand and participate in the democratic process.
2. Develop the values needed to be a responsible citizen and to actively participate in a democratic society.
3. Acquire the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be a global citizen who accepts diversity and respects people of other cultures.
4. Develop social skills in leadership, cooperation and communication through participation in extracurricular activities and community service projects.
5. Develop an understanding of his or her relationship to the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources.
6. Recognize and learn parenting skills in order to nurture healthy growth and development in others.

Develop a commitment to health and fitness

1. Develop the skills and apply the knowledge necessary to make decisions about his or her health.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to his or her physical and mental well-being.
3. Incorporate healthy practices as a lifelong response to social, environmental and physical changes.

Develop personal responsibility to sustain oneself economically

1. Become familiar with the expectations and be prepared for the traditional and nontraditional opportunities of the local, national and international work place.
2. Develop the desire to continue to learn.
3. Acquire a healthy, realistic work ethic, one that encourages pride in craftsmanship.
4. Become a critical consumer who has the skill necessary for making informed choices that enhance the quality of life.

Acquire a positive self-image

1. Develop a positive, realistic self-image.
2. Experience success in activities that develop his or her talents and skills and build his or her self-esteem.
3. Learn to form satisfying relationships with others based on respect, trust, cooperation and compassion.

Appendix E

State Board of Education
Long Range Goals
Relating to
School and Student Performance

To deal with the factors that influence student performance, the State Board of Education has adopted six goals. Three of those goals, listed in Appendix E, and their related initiatives deal directly with increasing student performance:

Goal I - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The State Board of Education will act to improve the educational experiences of students in order to assure that each student may reach his or her full potential.

Proposed initiatives related to Goal I

- Require all school districts to develop and define minimum outcomes and competencies of local public education efforts
- Develop a "model" set of outcomes and competencies for use by local school districts to be used as a framework by school districts
- Provide State leadership in identifying and disseminating successful instructional characteristics and model programs
- Advocate a balance between classroom performance and extra-curricular activities that promote academic, athletic, social and cultural skills
- Provide a climate for innovation and improvement of local practices including such activities as:
  - considering alternatives for the organization and structure of schools
  - providing incentives for excellence
  - exploring ways to raise expectations for students
  - facilitating networking activities between school districts
  - establishing recognition programs which reward improvement

- In conjunction with the school districts, develop a statewide student assessment program that is designed to meet the needs of students, teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers and legislators

- Recommend changes in resource allocation and instructional methods based on ongoing evaluation of assessment program outcomes

- Advocate the integration of Native Alaska and other minority language and culture programs and perspectives, and the development and incorporation of relevant Pacific Rim course objectives, materials, and activities into the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools

- Identify and develop innovative practices for distance learning; advocate funding for such practices

Goal II - "AT-RISK" STUDENTS

The State Board of Education will define and identify "at-risk" students and develop and support preventive and remedial strategies to assist those students to overcome the factors and circumstances that place them "at risk."

Proposed Initiatives related to Goal II

- Examine factors that contribute to student drop-out, compile data, and develop appropriate and effective remediation

- Search for solutions to existing problems associated with substance abuse, teen pregnancy, adolescent suicide, and other social and health problems

- Form collaborative relations to inform and galvanize public support, coordinate efforts, develop comprehensive programs and assure adequate funding for early childhood education

- Work with education coalition to develop strategy for increasing the number of counselors in schools and level of service to students

- Establish collaborative relations to enhance parenting skills as a strategy to assist in meeting needs of students

- Promote the development of a primary language base for young children

- Explore structural alternatives for increased learning time and improved instructional practices

Goal III PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The State Board of Education will strive to improve the skills of teachers, school administrators, and education support personnel in their professional growth and development.

Proposed initiatives related to Goal III

- Restate what teachers, school administrators, and certificated support staff are expected to know and be able to do when they enter into their professional duties, and devise means by which to measure accountability
- Examine professional certification and endorsement: consider standards to require that teachers be placed in teaching situations consistent with their areas of endorsement or preparation; consider teacher competency testing
- Recognize excellence in professional performance
- Recommend strategies to improve the proportion of minorities employed in professional positions in education
- Work with the University of Alaska and other state postsecondary institutions to strengthen teacher education programs, and to include support for professional development schools
- Examine the teacher/administrator evaluation system and recommend improvements, including parent and student evaluations
- Examine teacher tenure as it affects quality of education and district program management
- Provide support and resources to support continuing professional development opportunities for certificated personnel; including, especially, professional training initiatives applicable to Pacific Rim-related course objectives, materials and activities